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ELEKTRA
AMERICAN SAMURAI
PART 2 OF 3
STARRING
DAREDEVIL!
NOV
#12
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MILLIGAN
DEODATO, JR.
KOBLISH
Seems like old times!
DIRECT EDITION
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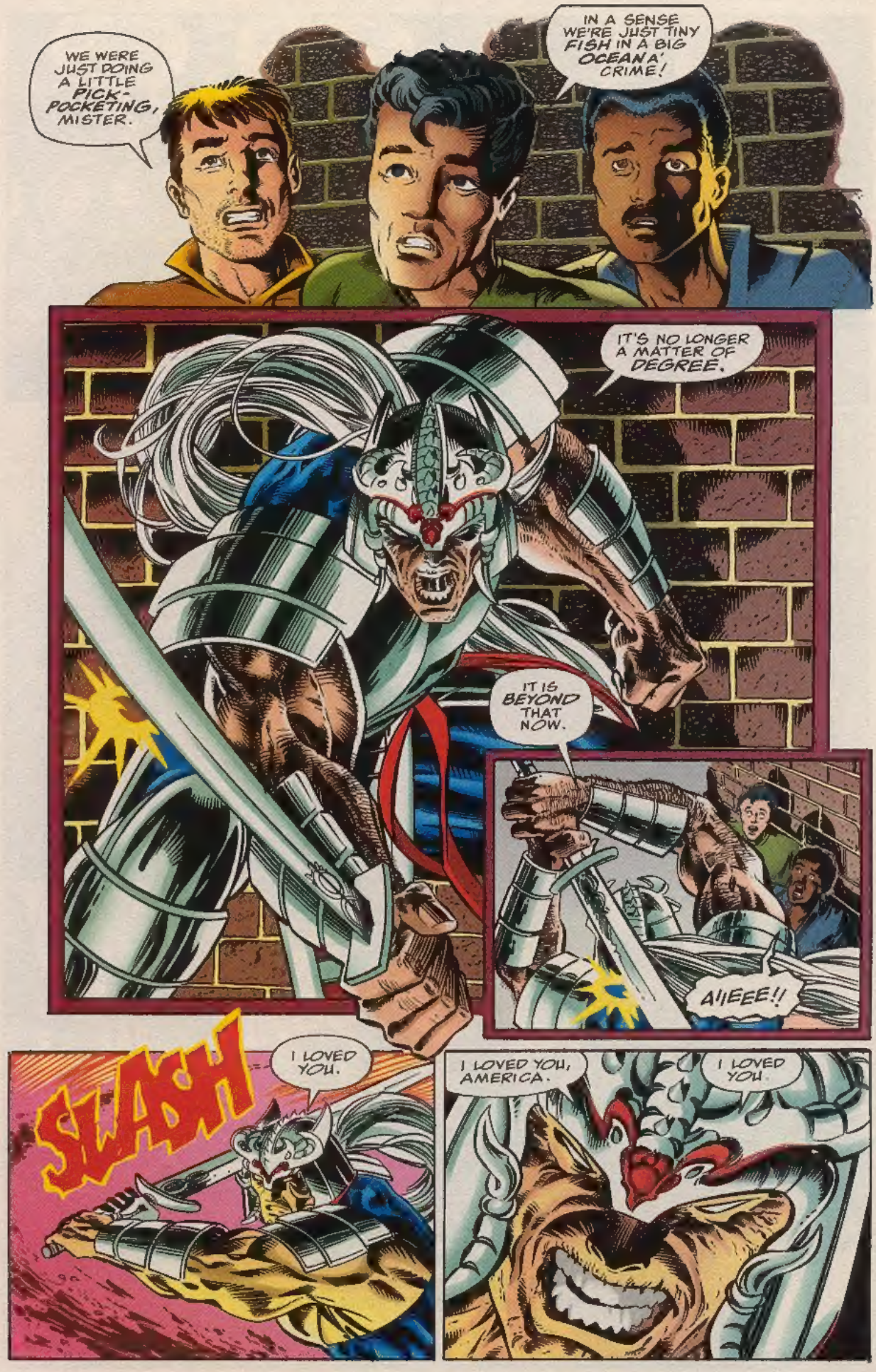
THE TIME THEY SPEND TOGETHER IS ALMOST HAPPY.
IT'S EASY TO PRETEND THEY'RE TOGETHER PURELY AND SIMPLY TO FIGHT THE SAMURAI.
PERHAPS THEY PUT THE LIGHT-HEADEDNESS DOWN TO THE FEVER GRIPPING THE CITY.
A CAR RADIO THIEF IS ALMOST TORN APART IN THE EAST VILLAGE.
A 'SAMURAI' IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS TURNS OUT TO BE A FORTY-SEVEN-YEAR OLD MATH LECTURER...
...HE STARTED DRESSING UP TO IMPRESS HIS ESTRANGED WIFE, WHO WASN'T.
AND THEN THEY GO HOME.
HOME TO THEIR OTHER LIVES.

SHE NEEDS ONLY THREE HOURS SLEEP A NIGHT.
BUT THIS MORNING, EVEN THAT IS DENIED HER.
TRY TO BLOCK EVERYTHING OUT, EVERYTHING BUT THE SAMURAI VIGILANTE...
...BUT WAIT...
...BREATHING...
ONE, TWO PEOPLE IN THE DARK...
OKAY.
LET'S SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE.
KLAK
OUCH! PASS THE SUNGLASSES!
KONNIE?

NINA LET ME CRASH HERE FOR THE NIGHT... MY APARTMENT HAS A BURST PIPE.
ANYONE MAKING TEA?
THINK I'VE BEEN CHEWING CARPET BUGS FOR THE LAST TWO HOURS.
KING?
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS ANYONE ELSE HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING?
MORNING, NINA - MAC SAYS A KIND OF INSOMNIA USED TO SPREAD THROUGH HIS CAMP BEFORE A BIG FIGHT...
SOMEONE MENTION MY NAME?
RNGG RNGG RNGG
Oh... HI, DARE-DEVIL.
Nah, COULDN'T SLEEP EITHER...

SURE YOU'LL BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN, ELEKTRA?
YEAH, LIKE, WON'T YOU NEED SOME-ONE TO IRON YOUR COSTUME OR SOME-THING?
FEDERAL EXPRESS
GO. I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN THIS VIGILANTE THING'S OVER.
YOU TAKE CARE, OKAY? THIS AMERICAN SAMURAI FREAK LOOKS LIKE ONE MEAN...
RNGG RNGG
SORRY, MAC. THAT'LL BE IMPORTANT.
WE'LL SPEAK LATER!
IT'S LIKE I ALWAYS SAY, MAC. IF YOU WANT AN UN-COMPLICATED LOVE LIFE...
RNGG RNGG
...DON'T DATE A SUPER HERO.

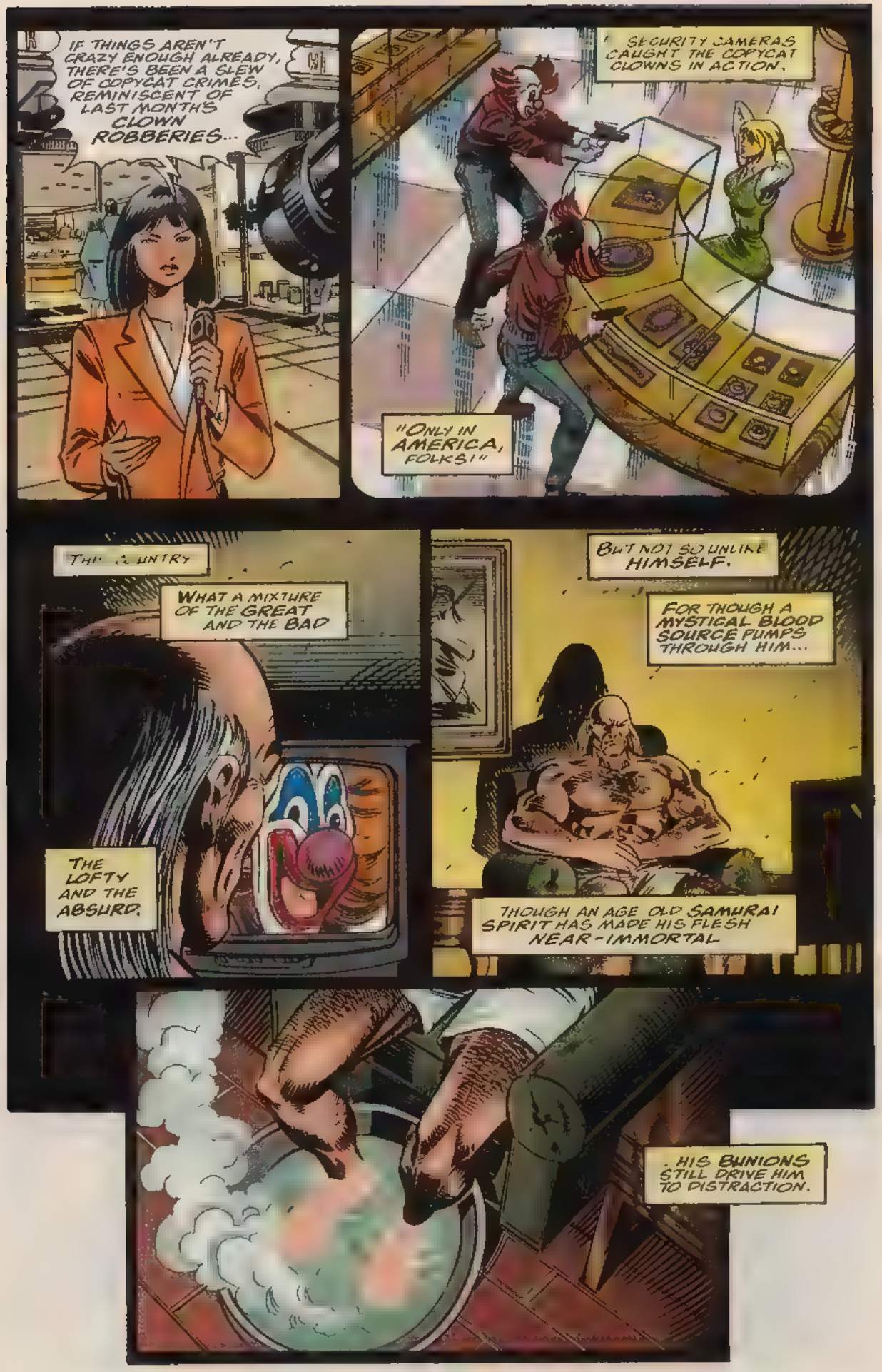

WE WERE JUST DOING A LITTLE PICK-POCKETING, MISTER.
IN A SENSE WE'RE JUST TINY FISH IN A BIG OCEAN A' CRIME!
IT'S NO LONGER A MATTER OF DEGREE.
IT IS BEYOND THAT NOW.
AIIEEE!!
SLASH
I LOVED YOU.
I LOVED YOU, AMERICA.
I LOVED YOU.

I LOVED YOU.
WHAT? MATT, THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR--
NO. HE'S SAYING, "I LOVED YOU"... "I LOVED YOU, AMERICA" ...CAN JUST PICK IT UP...
AND THE SCREAMING? ARE THEY STILL SCREAMING?
ONLY TWO OF THEM NOW.
Oh, GOD CAN'T YOU HEAR IT?
YOU KNOW I CAN'T. ARE WE NEAR?
VERY, WE--Ah, THINK THAT WAS A RIB-CAGE-- AND...
AND WHAT?
THEY'VE JUST STOPPED SCREAMING.
CAREFUL, MATT, THE SAMURAI MIGHT STILL BE AROUND.
THANKS FOR THE CONCERN, BUT SAVE IT...
... HE'S MOVING AWAY.
CAN MAKE OUT HIS HEARTBEAT, BUT TOO WEAK TO GET A TRACK ON.
LET ME HAVE A LOOK AT THAT.
NOT MUCH TO SEE.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

THE WOUNDS SUGGEST HE'S... LOSING CONTROL...
... HE IS AWESOME. TRAINED TO THE PEAK OF HUMAN POTENTIAL.
A SUPER-SAMURAI.
BUT I THINK... A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED.
HE'S BUILDING UP TO SOMETHING ... SOME FINAL EXTRAVAGANZA... BUT HE'S TIRED, AND TRYING TO HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER.
HE'S STRONG. STRONGER THAN WE EXPECTED. BUT HIS MIND HAS CRACKED.
CAN YOU GUESS HIS FAVORITE COLOR BY THE WAY HE MUTILATED THOSE THUGS?
IT'S PROBABLY RED. AND THERE'S ANOTHER THING...
...HE'S GOT SORE FEET.

D'YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THIS EXTRAVAGANZA MIGHT BE?
NOT YET. BUT I'M GETTING SICK OF RUNNING AROUND AFTER THIS GUY.
ME TOO.
WELL, THAT'S NOT STRICTLY TRUE. I DON'T WANT TO TRIVIALIZE THE HORROR OF WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, BUT...
...BUT IT'S GOOD, ISN'T IT? SWINGING AROUND THESE OLD BUILDINGS TOGETHER AGAIN?
AND YOU REALIZE WE HAVEN'T HAD ONE FIGHT SINCE WE'VE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER?
I KNOW. SCARY, AIN'T IT?
SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?
I'M GOING TO PHONE A GOOD COP I KNOW.
GOOD NIGHT, MATT.
SEE YOU TOMORROW, ELEKTRA.

THE FOLLOWING DAY IN MURRAY HILL.
AS SHE SEES HIM, HER HEART SKIPS, JUST ONCE.
LIKE IT USED TO
HE HEARS IT
AND HE'S GLAD HE LOVES KAREN SO MUCH
OTHERWISE
I SPOKE TO MORRISEY, THE COP
GOOD. AND I'VE BEEN TO A JOKE SHOP.
SAME KIND WORN BY THE SAMURAI'S FIRST VICTIMS.
LET'S HOPE HE HASN'T LOST HIS SENSE OF HUMOR.


IF THINGS AREN'T CRAZY ENOUGH ALREADY, THERE'S BEEN A SLEW OF COPYCAT CRIMES, REMINISCENT OF LAST MONTH'S CLOWN ROBBERIES...
SECURITY CAMERAS CAUGHT THE COPYCAT CLOWNS IN ACTION.
"ONLY IN AMERICA, FOLKS!"
THIS COUNTRY
WHAT A MIXTURE OF THE GREAT AND THE BAD
THE LOFTY AND THE ABSURD.
BUT NOT SO UNLIKE HIMSELF.
FOR THOUGH A MYSTICAL BLOOD SOURCE PUMPS THROUGH HIM...
THOUGH AN AGE OLD SAMURAI SPIRIT HAS MADE HIS FLESH NEAR-IMMORTAL
HIS BUNIONS STILL DRIVE HIM TO DISTRACTION.

I PROMISE YOU, YOU WON'T GET HURT. THIS ROBBERY HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED BY THE POLICE
HE'S RIGHT. WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS. JUST LOOK SCARED AND DON'T MENTION THIS CONVERSATION TO ANY JOURNALISTS.
HEY, KRUSTY! WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
IT WORKED!!
YEP
BUT NOW COMES THE GOOD PART.

YOU CAN GO HOME NOW, MATT.
THIS IS A SAMURAI THING.
YOUR CONFIDENCE MUST BE ASTRO-NOMICAL...
...FOR YOU TO UNDER-ESTIMATE ME.
VWWSSH
AREN'T YOU GLAD I HUNG AROUND NOW, ELEKTRA?
IT WILL BE A PITY TO KILL SUCH OBVIOUSLY FINE WARRIORS.
KRAKK
MATT! LOOK OUT!!
BUT THAT'S LIFE.
Huh?

KLUMP
NO!
WOW, I THINK THAT ONE TOOK A COAT OF PAINT OFF MY SUIT.
HE DOES NOT FEAR DEATH
FORGIVE ME
I'M THE ONE WHO DID THE UNDER-ESTIMATING.
FOR EVERY MOMENT, HE LIVES WITH DEATH.
KRRASH!!
IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN
HE KNOWS HE IS MAD
BUT HE SEES HIS MADNESS AS A SANE RESPONSE TO A MAD WORLD
AND HE HAS ONE LAST MAD ACT TO ACCOMPLISH.
THAT IN ITS OWN MAD WAY MIGHT MAKE SENSE OF HIS LIFE.

YOU STAYING HERE OR WHAT?
THERE'S NO HURRY. IF HE KNOWS WE'RE FOLLOWING HIM, HE MIGHT DO SOMETHING DANGEROUS.
I'VE GOT A TAG ON HIS HEARTBEAT. WE CAN FOLLOW AT A SAFE DISTANCE.
skff
I THINK YOU MIGHT BE SLOWING DOWN A BIT, MATT. HIS SWORD ALMOST TOOK YOUR HEAD OFF BACK THERE.
AWW, I WAS JUST GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO FINISH HIM OFF.
I KNOW HOW YOU HATE TO BE UPSTAGED BY ME.
WHEN IT HAPPENS, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.
SOMEHOW, I DOUBT THAT

SOON
YOU GO AROUND THE FRONT OF THE APARTMENT AND WE'LL COME AT HIM FROM BOTH SIDES.
NAH, YOU'LL JUST GET BORED WAITING AND GO IN BY YOURSELF
YOU GO 'ROUND THE FRONT THAT'S MORE YOUR STYLE I'M MORE OF A BACK WINDOW KIND OF GUY MYSELF.
HOW ABOUT I GO IN FIRST, MAKE HIM THINK I'M ALONE, THEN YOU COME IN LATER AND SURPRISE HIM?
I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA. I'M GOING IN, AND YOU WAIT OUT HERE IN CASE HE TRIES TO GIVE ME THE SLIP.
YOU WOULDN'T BE TRYING TO PROTECT ME, WOULD YOU?
NAH I JUST WANT ALL THE GLORY FOR MYSELF
ARE YOU TWO COMING IN FOR ME.. OR ARE YOU GONNA STAY OUT THERE SQUABBLING ALL DAY?

I AM AN AMERICAN CITIZEN. I FOUGHT FOR THIS COUNTRY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC. I ESCAPED FROM A JAPANESE LABOR CAMP.
I DIED IN THAT JUNGLE AND WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE BY THE KEEPERS OF THE SACRED KOAN. AND SAW THE BEAUTY OF LIFE.
NOW ALL I SEE IS GREED AND SLOPPY SIN AS CRUEL AS THE CAMP GUARDS, BUT WITHOUT THEIR SENSE OF PURPOSE.
HEY, NO ONE HATES CRIME MORE THAN ME.
BUT YOU'RE A CRIMINAL NOW, TOO. YOU'RE JUST LIKE THEM.
THIS IS NO LONGER ABOUT CRIME, BUT ABOUT SOMETHING THAT STARTED OUT SO BEAUTIFUL.
THE KEEPERS WHISPERED THE SACRED WORDS OF THE KOAN OVER MY DEAD BODY, AND I WAS REBORN MY SOUL CLEANSED, MY MIND CLEAR
AND SINCE THAT DAY I HAVE BEEN A SAMURAI WITH NO MASTER. EXCEPT MY BELIEF IN THIS COUNTRY.

NOW THIS COUNTRY HAS POLLUTED MY BEAUTIFUL LIFE THIS COUNTRY IS WITHOUT MEANING IT'S AN INSANE MASTER.
YOU, YOU MUST KNOW, FOR PEOPLE LIKE US, ONLY DEATH CAN GIVE LIFE MEANING.
LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING:
IF THE WHOLE WORLD IS A PRISON, HOW DO WE ESCAPE FROM IT?
SAMURAI, THIS IS A FALSE PATH. AND YOU ARE BEFOULING THE TRADITIONS WHICH GAVE YOU YOUR LIFE.
SAMURAI, KEEP ON KIDDING YOURSELF
THE SACRED KOAN IS RUMORED TO BE PART OF THE PRIMARY EQUATION THAT STARTED THE UNIVERSE
IT MADE ME STRONG
AND IT LETS ME DO THIS.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES AN EXPLOSION...
MATT! IT'S A--
I SAW IT!
ELEKTRA, IF WE DON'T--
WHAT?
MAKE IT, I--
MATT, DON'T--
"..SAY IT!"
KA-BOOM
A KIND OF SEMTEX EPIPHANY..
CAN'T HEAR, ELEKTRA--
..TO BLOW A HOLE
I'M HERE.
THROUGH OUR HEARTS

AND SO THEY FALL.
AND FOR ONE BRIEF, EXHILARATING MOMENT...
...THEY GIVE THEMSELVES UP TO THE OBSTINATE LAWS OF GRAVITY.
AND JUST LET THEM-SELVES FALL.
AND FALL.
AND FALL.
THE LANDING COMES TOO QUICKLY.
THE AWNING LIKE A BLANKET.
THMMP
BUT EVEN AS THAT BLANKET TEARS...
EVEN AS THEIR MUSCLES AUTO-MATICALLY TENSE TO SOFTEN THEIR LANDING...
EVEN AS THEY LIE ON THE SIDEWALK...
...THEY CONTINUE...
...TO LET THEMSELVES FALL.

FOR A MOMENT, THEY TRY TO RETURN TO THE PRE-EXPLOSION MODEL...
ELEKTRA... HAVE YOU EVER HEARD... OF THIS SACRED KOAN?
AS DOCTOR STRANGE MIGHT SAY, I HAVE HEARD WHISPER OF IT...
...AND I THINK I MIGHT KNOW NOW WHAT HIS BIG EXTRAVAGANZA MIGHT BE.
BUT IT CANNOT LAST--
AND I KNOW SOMETHING ELSE, MATT.
I KNOW FOR SURE NOW.
ME TOO.
YOU WERE THE FIRST WOMAN I EVER LOVED, ELEKTRA.
YOU WERE THE FIRST MAN I LOVED.
THIS IS WRONG. THERE'S KAREN...
THERE'S MAC.
THIS'LL BRING PAIN TO A LOT OF PEOPLE. PROBABLY INCLUDING OUR-SELVES.
YES, IT'S WRONG.
BUT I'M TIRED... OF TRYING TO BE RIGHT.
ME TOO.
ELEKTRA, I STILL...
Shhh...

I KNOW.
NEXT
a PEN and a SWORD

SAI'D BAR

POLLY WATSON
ASSISTANT EDITOR

BOBBIE CHASE
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
CHIEF

Dear Bobbie and Polly,

A few months ago, I wrote in and told you how much I enjoyed ELEKTRA. That's still the case, but there are a few things I'd like to comment on:

1) Elektra seems to travel by running around on rooftops. I have never been to New York, but I just can't believe that the fastest way to get from point A to point B is by travelling on the roofs. That may work for Spider-Man, but Elektra has no equipment to travel that way. Why don't you give her a motorcycle? That would be much faster, and she could do stunts with it and some nasty villains could blow it up twice a month. Sounds like more fun to me than jumping around all the time.

2) If Elektra wants to start a new life, why did she pick New York? At least 80% of all heroes and villains in the Marvel Universe live in NY. If she wants to find redemption, she should go on a journey that crosses the whole world, see different countries and people, and meet a bunch of new and old characters. She could even go to Greece. I think it would be fun to see her in her home country. The Four Winds from issue #9 would have been much cooler in China than they were in NY. New York is so crowded it gets boring.

3) I also see a problem in the fact that nobody seems to wonder about a woman in a bathing suit with lots of sais attached to her legs and a katana on her back. If the people in the Marvel Universe have reached a point where such things seem normal to them, I believe the readers aren't far behind. If we lose our sense of wonder, the characters will become uninteresting.

4) I wonder if I've missed anything. In issue #9, Elektra is hired by Detective Morrissey and I still don't know how these two know each other. Could you explain their relationship? I thought Elektra was an assassin who killed a bunch of people. Shouldn't she be hunted by instead of working for the police? Do they think this is a new Elektra, or what?

And what about issue #9, anyway? Elektra killed at least two people, which means that she is a murderer. It did not happen by accident. In fact, it seemed as if it was normal for her to kill people. What message do you believe you sent out? Kill everyone who seems to be a bad guy because...hey, he's a bad guy? I really don't know why this passed the Comics Code. Don't get me wrong: if you think Elektra is a killer, then let her kill until the blood spills out of the book and onto my desk. But not in a Code-approved book.

5) There are a few characters I'd like to see making a guest appearance: Diamondback, Snapdragon (unless she's dead--I'm not sure) and Heroes For Hire. I would also love to see Blacklash again. His appearances in ELEKTRA were so touching and meaningful that in my opinion he could become a permanent member of the supporting cast. Doctor Strange was great, too. The usual supporting cast isn't so interesting right now. In the beginning, I thought Nina McCabe would become kind of a second Elektra. There are great possibilities; for example she could be lured into the ranks of the Hand, which could lead to...anything you want! King Lau is boring because we have seen nearly nothing of him yet. That's sad because at first he made a good impression. A character that I really dislike is McKinley Stewart. His love for Elektra is not what I had hoped for. I don't think that they fit well together. It would be far more interesting to see Elektra hook up with Daredevil again, or maybe Wolverine.

6) I heard that Peter and Mike will leave the book. Sounds bad. Even though I wasn't too happy with issue #9, everything else has been great.

7) One other thing that seems important to me are the hinted abilities of Elektra. Does she have a healing factor like Wolverine, or is she developing one?

Well, believe it or not, I'm finally done. I just realized how long my letter is. Silly me: I wanted it in the letters page so that I could jump around and make my grandma proud. I would've liked to know what other readers think about some of my points. Anyway, thanks for your time, and keep up the great work!

Lars Meyer
Kiel, Germany

Well, Lars, you know how much we hate to disappoint anyone's granny, so here ya go! Printed! We had to cut out a line or two here and there to make it fit, but now your grandma can be proud! And what makes it worth our while is the fact that this is the kind of letter we like! Maybe not quite as long, though. As a general rule, we like to get more than one letter printed every month!

1) You're right. Hopping across rooftops may not be the most practical way to travel through the Big Apple, but it sure does beat those rush hour mobs! The motorcycle idea isn't bad, though....

2) A little traveling isn't a bad idea, but since Elektra is seeking redemption, she thought that the best place to do so would be the place where she could face the demons of her past. But you're getting your wish very soon!

3) Where've you been, Lars? The Marvel Universe is overflowing with costumed types!

4) Elektra's not working for the police. She's freelancing for Morrissey on the side. Suffice it to say that we'll explain Elektra and Morrisey's connection in the future....

And as for the killing, well, Elektra's a woman on the road to redemption. As you can see, she hasn't gotten there yet. She's trying her best to turn her life around, but sometimes that killer instinct she acquired as an assassin sneaks up on her and surprises her. She knows that killing is wrong, but old habits die hard, especially for someone who was soooo good at what she did. And by the way, the Code doesn't have a problem with killing in a comic book per se; we just have limits on how graphic we can be.

5) Hmmmm.... Those were some interesting ideas for guest appearances, Lars! We'll see what we can do, but--as always--we can't make any promises! And as for ELEKTRA's supporting cast: we hope you caught issue #10! Because if that issue didn't cause enough of a shakeup with Elektra's pals to make you interested in them, then we don't know what will!

6) Fear not! Mike Deodato isn't going anywhere! Peter Milligan, on the other hand, is ending his writing run on ELEKTRA. But Larry Hama's taking over the writing reins, and he's got tons of cool ideas for our heroine!

7) Healing factor? Naaah.

Well, that's about all the room we have this month (gee, thanks, Lars!), but we sure would like to hear what everyone else has to say about Lars's comments! Anything to add? Anything to argue? C'mon, gang, let's get something going here!

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